



Enhancing living and economic sustainability through community based tourism activities in Mahakanadarawa, Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka

K.T.L.U.S. Dayangana

Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Corresponding author: udaya8199@gmail.com

G.R.M. Gamlath

Department of Finance and Accountancy, Faculty of Business Studies,
Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna, Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.

methikalak@gmail.com

Abstract

This research explores the potentials and possibilities to promote HCA in the Mahakanadarawa area focusing the factors such as; capacity of the communities, natural and manmade resources, institutions, merits/demerits of the destination sites in the district, administrative and policy environment, and infrastructure facilities etc. Mahakanadarawa area was selected using a purposive sampling method in accordance with a requirement of tourism action plan of North Central Province Council (NCPC). Data were collected using observations and in-depth face-to-face interviews. The results indicated that, the formulation of strategic plans, prudent policy initiatives, and entrepreneurial community awareness programs would be extremely helpful to address the possible challenges and to exploit the warranted potentials of tourism within the area in a sustainable manner. Further, the findings of this research would benefit to increase the rural economy by promoting community-based activities, while providing useful evidence for present and future policy makers to introduce a new model in the context of community based sustainability. Further a gap analysis would be recommended for identifying the impact of all socio-cultural factors to implement HCA successfully and future research should validate the findings of the present study focusing the other tourism projects and destination in the country.

Keywords: Homestays and Community Activities (HCA), sustainability, tourism.

1. Introduction

Sri Lanka's tourism development efforts has been considering very much on the promotion of mass tourism development. It is obvious that various types of government encouragement for foreign and local large-scale investment on tourism, huge rebates given to tourists, and the promotion of low quality cheap holiday packages reduce not only earning capacity of the industry but also create high import leakages. This situation is likely to be serious when the community participation in tourism and the well-being of the community under tourism development are taken into account (Wimalaratana & Silva, 2004). For many instances, the community well-being is ignored and their participation with the industry is quite low in Sri Lankan context. Furthermore, the employed locals also face various job-related difficulties such as low wages, temporary employment, lack of job-security, long working hours, and unpaid overtime etc. which eventually cultivate not only the frustration and aggressive intensions among community members on current tourism management practices but also develop high polarization between hosts-guests under such circumstances.

North Central Provincial Council is implementing a three-year project to improve livelihoods of people and economic sustainability in Mahakanadarawa Area in Anuradhapura District of Sri Lanka namely "Developing Livelihoods and Increased Economic Sustainability through Homestay Based Tourism Project". This particular project aims to increase the capacity of marginalized producers and homestay and service providers in order to link with tourism value chain effectively. Further it focuses on improved understanding and strengthened partnerships and communications among the local community, local service providers, and the established tourism industry in order to mainstream sustainable pro-poor tourism in the province and, enhanced access and skills of small tourism service providers/ communities to provide quality service and accommodations as well as unique activities of Mahakanadarawa area. Anuradhapura District is still considered a poorer district of Sri Lanka although it has resources in abundance to thrive in key economic activities including tourism and contribute to the economic growth and development of the region. However, the tourism industry in the district is still in its preliminary stage and the huge resource base has been underutilized. One of the most popular domestic tourist destinations in Sri Lanka, Anuradhapura sacred city, Mihintale and other most Buddhist sacred places are located in this district itself, while some popular tourist districts in the island such as Polonnaruwa, Matale, Mannar, Puttalam and Kandy are located along the border or in close proximity to the district. A large number of tourists travel through the district to reach other popular destinations, but no tangible or physical contribution is made to the district for improvement of the tourism industry. Subsequently, this research examines the potentials as well as proposed strategies to promote tourism in the district with community participation in a sustainable manner (Yaru, Liu and Jing, 2018) such as; providing the general understanding of the new trends in tourism industry to the people including emerging sectors in tourism; ecotourism/ community-based tourism, social impacts of tourism (negative & positive), understanding of different cultures (differences in host & guest's cultures), safety, security & ethics, hygiene and food

safety (special for camping, tree houses and homestay providers), housekeeping (special for camping, tree houses and homestay providers), food & beverage services (special for camping, tree houses and homestay providers), customer care & positive attitudes, guide and guest handling practical training, general knowledge on business operations (management & marketing), general IT knowledge & skills and communication skills (English language skills). Therefore, introduction of such above-mentioned concept would be benefited to draw attention to potentials of the rural economy to promote the community-based sustainable tourism in Mahakanadarawa village of Anuradhapura district, while providing useful evidence for thought for present and future policy makers to introduce tourism industry in a way which will become a new model in the context of integrated tourism confirming sustainability. Having extensively travelled in the area, spoken to its villagers and taken into consideration other factors like their cultural diversities, etc., this concept is presented as the most suited one. It can be termed as 'Sustainable living and economic village tourism', which can provide a co-existence for an agricultural/ fisheries-based tourism industry in Mahakanadarawa village.

The Government of Sri Lanka, in its report of Department of Project Management and Monitoring, 2018, identifies the development of tourism and the possibility to create various employment opportunities, encourage domestic and foreign investments, and promote conservation practices on environmental, archeological, and socio-cultural aspects. The tourism sector reportedly provided more than 319,000 local jobs in 2015 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2017). Although the tourism industry is continuously growing, the weak planning and management, limited diversity of tourist markets, lack of value-adding opportunities in tourist products are contributing to a lack of and limiting per capita visitor/ tourist expenditure. As number of visitors/ tourists is increasing, there are huge pressures to environment in the areas of high tourist traffic, for land use in high tourism potential areas, to recruit appropriately skilled workers, and to maintain the quality standards of tourist services and products. Therefore, these certain areas that eager to develop and expand tourism in Sri Lanka are harming the natural environment and socio-cultural features.

This study intends to explore the possibilities to promote HCA in Mahakanadarawa of Anuradhapura district. In addition, the study focuses on the capacity of the particular village communities, natural and manmade resources, and institutions, merits/demerits of the destination sites in the district, administrative and policy environment, and infrastructure facilities etc. to a successful launch of Community Based Sustainable Tourism (CBST). It will finely formulate strategic plans, prudent policy initiatives, entrepreneurial and community awareness programs that would be extremely helpful to address the possible challenges and to exploit the warranted potentials of tourism within Mahakanadarawa village in a sustainable manner.

2. Literature review

Sustainable tourism concept is a modern global context, which does not deplete environmental, socio-cultural and economic resources bound with tourism activities (Aall, 2014). The ultimate goal is to not only to provide high-quality experiences for visitors but also to strengthen host communities and cultures, and develop tourism-related livelihoods while preserving the surrounding environments (Wijesundara & Gnanapala, 2016). In this context, the policy makers should concentrate the necessity of HCA concept to be formulated and implemented in an appropriate manner, which does not toward the conventional tourism as follows.

- a) In practice, conventional tourism is not a necessarily planned one to enhance conservation or education, does not benefit the local community, and can rapidly damage a fragile environment. As a result, it can destroy, or unrecognizably alter the resources and socio-cultures values on which it depends. In contrast, sustainable tourism is a deliberately planned one from the beginning to give benefits for local residents, respect local culture, conserve natural resources, and educate both tourists and local residents.
- b) In many cases, the lack of management controls and effective planning mechanisms of conventional tourism practices have created a major threat to environment. However, the sustainable tourism intentionally seeks to minimize the negative impacts of tourism activities, while contributing to environmental conservation and maintaining well-being of the community in both economically and socially.
- c) Actually, conventional tourism does not often provide funds for both conservation agendas for protecting areas from practices and development that are harmful to the natural beauty of an area and local communities. Sustainable tourism can produce the same profits as conventional tourism, but more of the profits stay in locally with the local community, and the area's natural resources and culture can be protected. Opportunities and threats related to tourism can be controlled through well-planned and managed sustainable tourism practices.

Considering the facts that of HCA as conceptualized through a modern sustainable tourism in a global scenario, the triple bottom line of sustainable tourism is to be linked to develop HCA in Mahakanadarawa village as a model tourism hub in this connection. Sustainable tourism parallel to HCA concept has three key components, sometimes referred to as the "triple bottom line" as environment, community (social and cultural) and profit (economy). First, Environmental well-being - Sustainable tourism has a low impact on natural resources, particularly in protected areas. It minimizes damage to the environment (i.e. flora, fauna, habitats, water, living environmental resources, energy use etc.) and ideally tries to benefit the environment. Second, Socio-cultural well-being - It does not harm the social structure or culture of the local community where it is located. It respects local socio-cultural values (Kimajja, 2015). It involves multi-stakeholders (individuals, communities, tour operators, food and lodging providers, transport providers, other tourism service providers, government/ local government

organizations/ institutions etc.) in all phases of planning, development, and monitoring, and educates stakeholders about their roles. Third, Economic well-being - It contributes to the economic well-being of the community, generating sustainable and equitable (fair) income for local communities and as many other stakeholders as possible. It benefits owners, employees and neighbors. It does not simply begin and then rapidly die because of poor business practices.

Henceforth, success of HCA conceptualized through incorporating adopting sustainable tourism principles and practices, the conceptual overview is designed to be formulated to keep exist in ground thereby concentrating the following four lay foundations on HCA based on the rationalized sustainable tourism scenarios. Lightening of becoming a sustainable tourism business thorough HCA is necessary to do so. It is important to remember that sustainable tourism management is not anti-growth. Rather, a sustainable approach recognizes the realities of resource limitations and helps people to work creatively within these boundaries for the long-term success of their business and the conservation of the social/cultural and natural environments in which they operate. Important points are; to decide to be sustainable and to establish mission statement then publicize it, promote it, embrace it, act upon it at all levels of their business involving strategies for all three pillars of sustainability as; economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability.

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) had also developed a clear statement on sustainable tourism: "Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life" support systems.

As the link between poverty and environmental degradation became clearer, the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002 focused on poverty alleviation as a key priority. Again, the role of tourism in advancing social sustainability made significant headway under discussions of responsible tourism and pro-poor tourism. "Making Tourism More Sustainable: A Guide for Policy Makers" by UNEP-UNWTO was a comprehensive policy document that described 12 aims of sustainable tourism development related to three "pillars" of sustainability: economic, social and environmental;

- a) Economic sustainability, which means generating prosperity at different levels of society and addressing the cost effectiveness of all economic activity. Crucially, it is about the viability of enterprises and activities and their ability to be maintained in the long term.
- b) Social sustainability, which means respecting human rights and equal opportunities for all in society. It requires an equitable distribution of benefits, with a focus on alleviating poverty. There is an emphasis on local communities, maintaining and

strengthening their life support systems, recognizing and respecting different cultures and avoiding any form of exploitation.

- c) Environmental sustainability, which means conserving and managing resources, especially those that are not renewable or are precious in terms of life support. It requires action to minimize pollution of air, land and water and to conserve biological diversity and natural heritage (Tek, Dangi, & Jamal, 2016).

Community Based Tourism (CBT) is a new paradigm in modern tourism & most of the new world, tourists are now demanding community-based experiences from their tour planners. Different scholars have defined CBT in different ways. Simpson (2008) defines CBT as “a model which centers on ownership, management and control of tourism projects by the local community”. The Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute defines CBT more rigorously as, “tourism that takes environmental, social and cultural sustainability into account. It is managed and owned by the community, for the community, with the purpose of enabling visitors to increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life”. Moscardo (2008) viewed CBT as an alternative form of tourism, which aims to maximize benefits to local people and achieve community development objectives through building community capacity and empowerment. Since, CBT is based on the active participation of the local community, it's important to create community events which may encourage CBT while creating a relationship in between local community and visitors. To facilitate this, different public administrations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), private institutions and the local community itself should get involved and work together. As many other industries, CBT is developed on set of theories and concepts. Responsible Ecological Social Tours Project (REST) identified some principles through host community can use tourism as a tool for community development. According to REST, CBT should:

- a) Recognize, support and promote community ownership of tourism;
- b) Involve community members from the start in every aspect;
- c) Promote community pride;
- d) Improve the quality of life;
- e) Ensure environmental sustainability;
- f) Preserve the unique character and culture of the local area;
- g) Foster cross-cultural learning;
- h) Respect cultural differences and human dignity;
- i) Distribute benefits fairly among community members;
- j) Contribute a fixed percentage of income to community projects (Dissanayake & Samarathunga, 2015).

Therefore, HCA concept throughout a community-based sustainable tourism development is supposed to deliver benefits to the village community while they are encouraged to develop their tourism businesses and related ventures (Acharya & Halpenny, 2013) as well as the incentives can be taken to enable the community to get benefits collectively from the areas on tourism and conserve wildlife and natural resources etc. In addition, rural villagers' skills and capacity for tourism development

while enhancing them in order to improve their income levels and well-being, villagers' ethic, norms and social values are protected (Yasami, et al, 2017). Arts, music, traditional dance, folklore and other sociocultural heritages are promoted for tourism development while preserving and enhancing them (Gnanapala, 2015). Tourism development will work hand-in-hand with conservation of the environment and socio-cultural heritage. Finally, the theoretical framework is suggested to be improved with incorporating core-values of the societal sustainable tourism practices with the use other related conceptual paradigms in order to develop and implement though a well-balanced sustainable community-based tourism strategy with matching globally accepted tourism guidelines.

3. Research methodology

Tourism sector is a major income contributor to the Gross National Product (GNP) as well as and it has shown a significant impact to the economic growth in Sri Lanka (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2017). According to the country's tourism development plan, North Central Province is an important region indicating that it has been a most sacred cultural and religious hub in Buddhism with a prolong history with agro-based irrigation system. Therefore, the local and international tourists are coming to the region to see this environment. In this context, there have been major vacuum for implementing a well-sustainable tourism strategy to fulfill the requirement. There are many places in the region to develop, so that the purposive sampling method was used to select the Mahakanadarawa village as a priority in connection with the NCP's tourism development. In this context, it was noted that the area was considered as a great and huge water reservoir in the Anuradhapura District, and no more attraction of this tank and surrounding area is a considerable factor aligning with the facts that; Lot of communities in the rural areas is still living poorly and mainly they are depending on traditional agriculture and fisheries; limited opportunities for additional income generation and insufficient infrastructure facilities. Therefore, the researchers conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews to investigate on the concept HCA based on the literature findings and the data were collected from the particular target groups such as; Fisheries associations, community members of Chena cultivation and agricultural farmers, community groups of traditional dancing, sportsmen's and community of organizing festivals and cultural events and trained young community as cycling activity providers as well as activity guides in Mahakanadarawa area. Simultaneously, the researchers conducted telephone discussions and surveys with the stakeholders on tourism development in NCP such as; Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Christine affairs, North Central Province (NCP) Council, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management (DTHM) of Rajarata University of Sri Lanka (RUSL), Mihintale Divisional Secretariat, Forest Department, Wildlife Conservation Department, Agriculture Department, Irrigation Department, Archeology Department, Mihintale Local Government Authority (Mihintale Pradeshiya Saba), Mihintale Police Station, Mihintale Civil Security

Department, Religious leaders and other relevant government organizations in the area. After collecting data, the researchers reviewed and analyzed the data in a descriptive manner.

4. Results and discussion

Mahakanadarawa tank (*wewa*) is a one of biggest water reservoir in the Anuradhapura District. Unfortunately, there is no more attraction of this tank and surrounding area among the tourists so far. Lot of communities is still living and depending on traditional agriculture and fisheries. Opportunities for additional income generation also are limited. In addition, infrastructure facilities are not sufficient. Although, there are various tourism opportunities in Mahakanadarawa area, near to the tank (*wewa*) and those can be pointed out as follows;

- a) Agro tourism opportunities – i.e. Observing of traditional paddy cultivation, chena cultivation and vegetable cultivations, Tasting and preparation of traditional foods and beverages, participate to agricultural activities, selling of farm fresh and processed products, arranging tours in agricultural areas, Observing and participating to community events related to the agriculture, selling of crafts/ souvenirs, camping in farms/ agricultural areas, Arranging accommodation in tree huts etc.
- b) Fisheries related activities – i.e. Fishing, Rowing canoes, Swimming, arranging tours around the tank (*wewa*), Observing and participating to other fisheries related activities (e.g. arranging fishing nets, fishing vessels and equipment), Tasting and preparation of freshwater fish and prawn based foods, Observing and participating to community events related to the fisheries, camping in tank shore, Arranging accommodation in tree huts near the tank shore etc.
- c) Rural tourism activities – i.e. Observing and participating to traditional community events, arranging tours in rural areas/ villages, Tasting and preparation of traditional foods and beverages, arranging homestay services, camping in rural areas, Arranging accommodation in tree huts in rural areas etc.
- d) Eco and wildlife tourism activities – i.e. Arranging eco-camping, arranging accommodation in tree huts in forest areas, arranging jeep safaris, arranging trails, tracking, trekking, hiking in rural and wild areas, Observing and arranging photography opportunities of wildlife (e.g. Elephants, Birds).
- e) Community Based Tourism activities – i.e. Empowering well organized and cohesive rural community as community associations, community organizations, youth clubs and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to serve the tourists, Forming strong multi-stakeholder network to give better service to tourists, Developing communities as entrepreneurs in tourism businesses, Empowering some selected people as capable tour guides, Strengthen managerial, sales and marketing

skills of rural people to maintain, expand and sustainability of tourism related business activities etc.

Concentrating the above tourism opportunities, this area was not developed in sustainable tourism concepts due to poor infrastructure facilities, unfavorable weather and climate changes, lack of educated and skillful peoples, animal-human conflicts, non-organized agricultural and fisheries activities, lack of community-based activities, unfavorable political and economic influences and negative attitudes of some peoples. In addition, this area is not popular as a tourist destination. Therefore, Mahakanadarawa area is existed in poor condition. In this case, the relevant information of this concept is collected from archeological, historical, irrigation and environmental sources. Different ministries, universities, resource personals, libraries, books, internet are used to collect those relevant data. After collecting relevant and correct data, the researchers directly visited the whole area and most appropriate sustainable forms for those specific sites are identified. After selecting those places, the situation of infrastructure, environmental, socio-cultural and economic conditions of said places is evaluated through SWOT analysis.

According to the existing background of Mahakanadarawa area, the researchers were encouraged to do this study for achieving the objectives; identify places of Mahakanadarawa area which dominant to specific sustainable tourism concepts, evaluate current situation of infrastructures, environmental, socio-cultural and economic conditions of that area and reduce poverty of that area by effective sustainable tourism concepts. Ultimately, the researchers suppose that a systematically developed Mahakanadarawa village by implementing an effective integrated sustainable tourism project for HCA to reduce the poverty of community and enhance their living conditions. The following expected outcomes would be the phenomenon of this research.

- a) Increase capacity of marginalized producers, homestay and service providers to link to tourism value chain.
- b) Improved understanding and strengthened partnerships and communications among the local community, local service providers and the established tourism industry as stakeholders.
- c) Enhanced access and skills of small tourism service providers/ communities to provide quality services and accommodations as well as unique activities of Mahakanadarawa area.
- d) Build proper income for the villagers and 10% of total income as a Provincial Council income.
- e) Develop twelve (12) homestay units in Mahakanadarawa village and four (04) tree houses for accommodation in Chena cultivation lands border to Mahakanadarawa tank and sanctuary.
- f) Develop Homestay Tourism Association (HTA) in Mahakanadarawa village.

- g) Develop training facilities including theoretical knowledge and practical approaches.
- h) Develop infrastructure facilities and develop marketing tools and materials.
- i) Apply for the SLTDA Registration.

Ultimately, this research identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in this area in order to develop a better tourism mechanism based on HCA according to the traditions of sustainable community-based tourism strategies as follows;

Strengths

- a) Strong backup by the government and local government setup.
- b) Corporation extended by the North Central Province (NCP) Council and Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA).
- c) Have knowledgeable and experienced workforce in the Government and local government setup.
- d) Have one of the best and largest water reservoir (Tank) called Mahakanadarawa tank.
- e) Have relatively large Fisheries and agricultural economic platform.
- f) Locate near to the famous tourist destination called Mihintale with greatest Buddhist temples, Ancient Buddhist ruins, and world first wildlife sanctuary.

Weaknesses

- a) No proper knowledge and coordination regarding tourism activities among the Forest Department, Wildlife Conservation Department, Archeology Department, Agriculture Department, Irrigation Department, other government officers etc.
- b) No proper awareness/ linkages among the major economic structures (i.e. Fisheries, agriculture, trading, maintenance) and tourism in the area.
- c) Insufficient facilities in the Mahakanadarawa surrounding area and Mihintale area. (i.e. Roads, Electricity, Communication, Sanitary, Water supply).
- d) Less awareness regarding sustainable tourism among the community.
- e) Poor health facilities in the area (Mihintale hospital is a small base hospital and there are no sufficient Medical Specialist channel facilities in the Mahakanadarawa and Mihintale area).

Opportunities

- a) Have more famous tourist destinations closed to the Mahakanadarawa area (i.e. Anuradhapura, Ritigala, Seegiriya, Habarana, etc.).
- b) Have rich biodiversity in the surrounding area that can promote eco, wildlife tourism.
- c) Have numerous agricultural lands, water reservoirs (tanks) in the surrounding area that can promote Agro and fisheries related tourism.

- d) Have rich cultural expressions/ elements of local cultural heritage, like dance, music, drama, crafts, fine arts, dresses, customs, traditions, ceremonies and cuisines that can use as cultural tourism aspects in this area.
- e) Have enough lands for starting/ conducting tourist activities.
- f) Ability to get numerous support (knowledge, skills, technical, training, research etc.) from the Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale (from both Academic staff and students).

Threats

- a) Unfavorable weather and climate conditions are arising time-to-time year around. (i.e. Droughts, Floods, High winds).
- b) Scarcity of quality potable water.
- c) Human-animal conflicts. (i.e. from wild elephants, poisonous snakes, wild boars, flying insects).
- d) Negative attitudes and behavior of some local community against the tourism.
- e) Spreading of chronic diseases (kidney) among the community.
- f) Security and safety issues for both residents and foreigners.
- g) Unfavorable political and economic influences, which can demotivate community to start and carry on tourism related enterprises, activities.
- h) Seasonality nature of tourism, which can demotivate community to start and carry on tourism related enterprises, activities due to economic uncertainty.

In the light of the outcomes, it reveals that the HCA concept is supposed to be the best alternative to develop Mahakanadarawa area as a main tourism hub aligning the key performance measures.

5. Conclusion

North-Central Provincial Council is implementing a project to improve livelihoods of people and economic sustainability in Mahakanadarawa area in the Anuradhapura District of Sri Lanka. This aim of this project aimed to improve understanding and strengthen partnerships and communications among the local community & service providers, enhanced access and skills of small service providers to provide quality services as homestay, eco-camping etc. in the area that is bound with "Mahakanadarawa" water reservoir. In Sri Lanka, Anuradhapura is a poorer district, although it has resources in abundance to enhance tourism and contribute to the economic growth. Tourism of this district is still in its beginning and the huge resource base has yet been unused. The popular tourist destinations named Anuradhapura sacred city and Mihintale are in this district and popular tourist districts such as Polonnaruwa, Matale, Mannar and Puttalam are located along the border to this. According to the emphasis on the fulfillment of research gap on the previously mentioned thematic tourism scenario, this research selected Mahakanadarawa village on the basis stipulated

in the annual country tourism plan in Sri Lanka. A large number of tourists travel through the district to reach other popular destinations. This research concentrates on the potentials and strategies to promote tourism in the area is with community participation in a sustainable manner (providing the general understanding of the new trends (i.e. eco/ agro/ community-based), socio-cultural impact (negative & positive), safety & security, hygiene, food safety, housekeeping, food & beverage services (for camping, tree houses and homestay providers), customer care, positive attitudes, guide and guest handling techniques, general knowledge on business operations on management & marketing), General IT and communication skills. Research findings were helpful to examine the tourism potentials as well as the propose strategies to promote the industry in Mahakanadarawa area with the community participation in sustainable manner. In addition, this research intends to explore the potentials and possibilities to promote HCA in the selected area by focusing the factors such as; capacity of the communities, natural and manmade resources, institutions, merits/ demerits of the destination sites in the district, administrative and policy environment, and infrastructure facilities etc. to a successful launch of HCA. In addition, the formulation of strategic plans, prudent policy initiatives, and entrepreneurial community awareness programs would be extremely helpful to address the possible challenges and to exploit the warranted potentials of tourism within the area in a sustainable manner. This study would benefit to increase the rural economy by promoting community-based activities, while providing useful evidence for present and future policy makers to introduce a new model in the context in community-based sustainability.

6. Suggestions

Based on the above-described research findings from the literature and the collected data analysis, the researchers are of the view that the following suggestions are presented to overcome weaknesses, grab opportunities and face to threats.

- a) No proper knowledge and coordination regarding tourism activities among the Forest Department, Wildlife Conservation Department, Archeology Department, Agriculture Department, Irrigation Department, other government officers etc.: - The researches noticed this is a huge barrier to implement and maintain sustainable tourism practices in the Mahakanadarawa area. For that, strong and effective awareness programs, training programs, workshops, guest lectures should conduct by the NCP Council, SLTDA, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Other government and local government organizations/ institutes to form proper and systematic network among previously mentioned stakeholders.
- b) No proper awareness/ linkages among the major economic structures (i.e. Fisheries, agriculture, trading, maintenance) and tourism in the area.: - The researches noticed this is another major barrier to implement and maintain sustainable tourism types in the Mahakanadarawa area. For that strong and effective awareness programs, training programs, workshops, guest lectures should conduct by the NCP Council, SLTDA, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Other government and local government

organizations/ institutes to form proper and systematic linkages among aforesaid economic structures and sustainable tourism practices.

- c) Insufficient facilities in the Mahakanadarawa surrounding area and Mihintale area. (i.e. Roads, Electricity, Communication, Sanitary, Water supply).: - The researchers found this is a major problem against the sustainable tourism aspects in the Mahakanadarawa area. For that, government and local government organizations/ institutes should consider this situation deeply and need to take proper and effective actions to increase the facilities in the area as a priority basis.
- d) Less awareness regarding sustainable tourism among the community.: - The researchers observed this as another barrier when implementing and maintaining sustainable tourism businesses in the Mahakanadarawa area. For that strong and effective awareness programs, training programs, workshops, guest lectures should conduct by the NCP Council, SLTDA, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Other government and local government organizations/ institutes to give systematic and effective knowledge, skills and attitudes among the community.
- e) Poor health facilities in the area (Mihintale hospital is a small base hospital and there are no sufficient Medical Specialist channel facilities in the Mahakanadarawa and Mihintale area). The researchers found this also as a barrier versus the sustainable tourism in the Mahakanadarawa area. For that, government and local government organizations/ institutes should take proper and effective actions to increase the facilities in the area as a major concern. (i.e. Renovate Mihintale hospital with some modern facilities, Provide Medical Specialist channel facilities in the Mihintale area).
- f) Have more famous tourist destinations closed to the Mahakanadarawa area (i.e. Anuradhapura, Ritigala, Seegiriya, Habarana, etc.): - Can arrange excursions, tour packages to previously mentioned areas.
- g) Have rich biodiversity in the surrounding: - Can promote ecotourism, wildlife tourism, Safaris in this area.
- h) Have numerous agricultural lands, water reservoirs (tanks) in the surrounding area: - Can promote agro and fisheries related tourism in the area.
- i) Have rich cultural expressions/ elements of local cultural heritage, like dance, music, drama, crafts, fine arts, dresses, customs, traditions, ceremonies and cuisines: - Can promote cultural tourism in the area.
- j) Have enough lands for the tourist activities.: - Can design and start tourism related enterprises easily.
- k) Ability to get numerous support (knowledge, skills, technical, training, research etc.) from the Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of Rajarata

University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale (from both Academic staff and students).: - Can build up effective network among NCP Council, SLTDA, Local governmental authorities and the University by signing MOUs.

- l) Unfavorable weather and climate conditions are arising time-to-time year around. (i.e. Droughts, Floods, High winds).: - For that government and local governmental bodies can take actions to Renovate and construct tanks, cannels, flood barriers, and Arranging tree plantations, reforestation etc.
- m) Scarcity of quality potable water.: - For that, government and local governmental bodies can take necessary arrangements to renovate and construct tanks, cannels, water purification facilities, and Potable water distribution mechanism.
- n) Human-animal conflicts. (i.e. from wild elephants, poisonous snakes, wild boars, flying insects).: - Can take necessary precautions to minimize human-animal conflicts by Arranging forest zonings, arranging elephant/ wildlife corridors, constructing electric fences, providing sufficient medical facilities against wildlife/ snake attacks, implementing proper mosquito controlling mechanism etc.
- o) Opposed attitude and behavior of some local community against the tourism.: - Can arrange appropriate awareness programs, discussions, seminars, workshops, guest lectures to minimize opposed attitude and behavior of some local community by explaining positive impacts of sustainable tourism.
- p) Spreading of chronic diseases (kidney) among the community.: - Can provide sufficient medical facilities against chronic diseases, and implement proper preventive mechanism to minimize those incidents.
- q) Security and safety issues for both residents and foreigners.: - Can recruit government security forces especially "Civil Security Department" professional by giving some basic tourism knowledge to overcome security and safety issues in the area. (in the both day and night times). Also, can form a tourist police station in the Mihintale area.
- r) Unfavorable political and economic influences that can demotivate community to start and carry on tourism related enterprises, activities.: - For that government and local government organizations/ institutes, Police and other security forces should take proper and effective actions to minimize such influences in the area.
- s) Seasonality nature of tourism that can demotivate community to start and carry on tourism related enterprises, activities due to economic uncertainty.: - In this concern, the community can train to perform both tourism and non-tourism based economic activities like Agriculture, fisheries, trading, maintenance. In the season, community can do both activities and, in the off-season, they can carry on their non-tourism businesses/ works.

References

- Aall, C. (2014). Sustainable Tourism in Practice: Promoting or Perverting the Quest for a Sustainable Development? *Sustainability*, 6(1), 2562-2583
- Acharya, B. P., & Halpenny, E. A. (2013). Homestays as an Alternative Tourism Product for Sustainable Community Development: A Case Study of Women-Managed Tourism Product in Rural Nepal. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 1-21.
- Central Bank of Sri Lanka, (2017). *Annual Report*, Colombo: Central Bank of Sri Lanka.
- Central Bank of Sri Lanka, (2018). *Annual Report*, Colombo: Central Bank of Sri Lanka.
- Dissanayake, D.M.M.I., & Samarathunga, W.H.M.S, (2015). *Prospects and Challenges of Community Based Tourism Promotion in Mihintale area*, Proceeding of International Research Symposium Rajarata University of Sri Lanka (620-628), Mihintale. Sri Lanka.
- Gnanapala, W.K.A.C. (2015). Tourists Perception and Satisfaction: Implications for Destination Management, *American Journal of Marketing Research*, 1(1), 7-19.
- Government of Sri Lanka, Vision 2025: *Sri Lanka's Path to Prosperity* - World Bank Group. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/10/17/vision-2025-sri-lankas-path-to-prosperity>
- Kimaija, R.K. (2015). Homestay Tourist Accommodation as a Tool For socio-Economic Wellbeing of Rural Communities in Kenya: A case of Taita Taveta County, thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of Master of Science in International Tourism in the School of Hospitality and Tourism of Kenyatta University. Retrieved from <http://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/handle/123456789/13289>
- Moscardo, G. (2008). Sustainable tourism innovation: Challenging basic assumptions. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 8(1), 4-13.
- North Central Provincial Council (2018). Tourism Development Report, Sri Lanka.
- Silva, D. A. C., & Wimalaratana, W. (n.d.). Community Based Sustainable Tourism Development in Sri Lanka: Special Reference to Moneragala District. Retrieved from <https://www.Haroldgoodwin.info/PPT/PPTMonaragala.pdf>
- Simpson, M. C. (2008). Community benefit tourism initiatives-A conceptual oxymoron? *Tourism management*, 29(1), 1-18.
- Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (2014), Accommodation Guide (April – August). Sri Lanka: SLTDA.